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AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

Maputo, Mozambique, 27-29 August 2001

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CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

The African Regional Conference in preparation for the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 5) to the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held at the Rovuma Carlton Hotel, Maputo, Mozambique, from 27 to ?9 August 2001. It was organized by the UNCCD secretariat in collaboration with the Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Action of Mozambique. It was supported financially by the Governments of Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD. It was attended by the UNCCD national focal points of 41 African country Parties, representatives of four subregional organizations and 13 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Conference was also attended by representatives of 10 African regional and international organizations and three bilateral partners as well as one resource person (see annex ???).

II. OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony was marked by the following addresses:

- Address by Mr. E. Dierckx de Casterlé, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations;

- Address by Mr. Fernando Costa, Head of Cooperation, Embassy of Portugal to Mozambique;

- Address by the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Ambassador Hama Arba Diallo;

- Official opening of the Conference by H.E. Mr. J. W. Kachamila, Minister for Coordination of Environmental Affairs, in charge of the implementation of UNCCD in Mozambique.

III. COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU

Following the opening ceremony, the participants proceeded to elect the Bureau entrusted with the coordination of the Conference. It was composed as follows:

- Chairperson: Mr. Francisco Mabjaia, Vice Minister for Coordination of Environmental Affairs of Mozambique
- Vice-Chairperson: Mr. Bernard Oloo K'Omudho, Kenya
- Vice-Chairperson: Mr. Adrian Jebril, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
- Vice-Chairperson: Mr. Pierre Batoungadio, Republic of the Congo
- Rapporteur: Ms. Zenabu Wasai, Ghana

Following the setting up of the Bureau, the agenda of the Conference was adopted.

The whole meeting took place in plenary form.

IV. RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE

1. Consideration of the outcomes of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) meeting

A presentation was made by Ms. Bettina Horstmann, Coordinator, Africa Facilitation Unit, UNCCD secretariat. A summary is given below.

Forty-two African country reports were reviewed by the AHWG, 10 during the fourth Conference of the Parties (COP 4) and 32 during the inter-sessional meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group. In addition, regional and subregional activities were considered. African countries reported positive results in awareness-raising at the institutional level and participation of civil society, but resource mobilization still remains a core challenge as African countries that had adopted their NAP and subsequently launched the consultative process recognized the lack of response from developed country Parties, i.e. the entry into concrete partnership arrangements. However, although partners orient their assistance towards the priorities of recipient countries, UNCCD-NAP implementation is often not listed as a priority, and integration of NAPs into major strategic frameworks for cooperation is a prior condition to NAP funding.

Parties noted the need for synergies at all levels as well as synergy with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA). Effective support through the Global Mechanism and the opening of a window for UNCCD activities by the GEF were called for. Finally, the lack of work accomplished on the issue of benchmarks and indicators and CST liaison activities was broadly recognized and addressed.

The following major strategic conclusions were drawn: identification of best practices and successes is needed; elaboration of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and integration of UNCCD measures into the framework for debt swap are to be given priority; National Information Systems on desertification to enhance the information flow are to be established; the regulatory and normative framework at national level is to be adjusted to the requirements of the Convention; country-driven consultative processes are needed to bring about partnership arrangements as an indispensable condition for making the Convention operational; there is a need for linkages and synergies with other conventions on the environment and development.

The discussion that followed featured the following speakers: Egypt, Burundi, AFAD, Uganda, Italy, Morocco, Kenya, Sahel Défis, Ethiopia, Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Liberia, Eritrea and EMG. They focused on the following issues:

- The need to emphasize the creation of an institutional body to deal with reports, i.e. the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC);
- The impression that gender issues were being overlooked;
- The need for Africa to focus on poverty reduction and the need to push for prioritization of UNCCD issues at national level;
- The need to make available copies of the Memorandum of Understanding established between the UNCCD secretariat and UNDP at UNDP country offices;

- The fact that the AHWG was also useful in showing the limitations of the UNCCD process such as the fact that UNCCD projects are not often listed as priority activities by developing country governments;
- The question of frequency of reporting to the COP;
- The need for African country Parties to agree on common standards as regards the presentation of their priorities to the COP and to the international community;
- The need to strengthen interregional collaboration, particularly in the fields of transboundary natural resources management and involvement of civil society;
- The need to emphasize that actions taken under the UNCCD need to address and reach not only politicians but local people;
- The need to identify common benchmarks and indicators.

The representative of Burundi noted that although Central African countries do not have the same environmental problems, they have in common the goal of soil conservation and their commitment to the UNCCD process.

Following these statements, clarifications and observations were given by the Executive Secretary and Ms. Horstmann. They particularly referred to the fact that more emphasis is to be laid on NAP finalization and adoption with a view to results being reported to the forthcoming Rio+10 summit. Moreover, the international community should strengthen its institutional efforts to foster the implementation of the Convention as an important tool to address the issue of poverty reduction.

2. Consideration of the outcomes of COP 4 as regards the implementation of the UNCCD in affected African country Parties

A presentation was given by Ambassador Rogatien Biaou from Benin, Chairman of the African Group of Experts of the UNCCD. It is briefly summarized below:

The AHWG highlighted the following key thematic topics: best practices and successes, main difficulties, obstacles and challenges, participation of all actors, including the financial and technical support from developed countries, linkages and synergies with other Conventions, strategies established within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies.

The adoption of the Declaration on the Commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention is an important political step towards the full and effective implementation of the Convention. Therefore, Parties should popularize the Declaration through distribution at all levels, organization of press conferences, information meetings, and so on.

Concerning the collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Parties should take note with appreciation that the GEF Council at its meeting of 9-11 May 2001 expressed strong support for strengthening the efforts of the GEF to finance activities addressing land degradation (desertification and deforestation) and it agreed that these efforts should be enhanced while continuing the pursuit of the designation of land degradation as a focal area of the GEF.

By decision 21/COP.4, the COP takes note with appreciation of the Declaration of the third Round Table of Parliamentarians on the implementation of the Convention. The national focal points should push members of parliament of their countries to implement effectively the provisions of the three declarations already adopted.

With regard to the work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology, the COP invites Parties and observers to: contribute case studies illustrating the communication of best practices relating to the strategies for the communication of information; include in such reports short accounts of traditional and scientific knowledge produced in various thematic fields relative to the issue of combating desertification, and strategies on mechanisms used for the communication and evaluation of the process, if available. The COP encourages Parties to hold extensive consultations on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST.

Following this presentation, Sahel Defis and Tunisia made comments which highlighted the points below:

- Parties are invited to reflect upon how better to integrate NGO activities within the national reporting process;
- The fact that national focal points are often overloaded with a multitude of COP decisions and recommendations and are thus not in a position to follow up each of them as long as capacity building at national level is not strengthened.

3. Consideration of the outcomes of the UNCCD/ACP joint workshops on the integration of priority issues of the NAPs into the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement Country Support Strategies (CSS)

Presentations were given by Mr. Emmanuel Chinyamakobvu and Mr. Boubacar Cisse, UNCCD secretariat, and are summarized below.

The Cairo Declaration of April 2000 placed emphasis on support to UNCCD and was complemented by the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States-European Union (ACP-EU) Cotonou Partnership Agreement of June 2000. There is thus significant complementarity between the UNCCD and the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. The task was therefore to identify approaches to facilitate access to existing financial mechanisms offered within the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The objectives of the UNCCD-ACP Addis Ababa and Cotonou workshops were: To bring together UNCCD national focal points and countries' national European Development Fund (EDF) authorizing officers; to familiarize Parties with developments and progress in the implementation of the UNCCD in ACP countries; to establish the commitment of country Parties to include UNCCD issues into CSS and subsequently into national indicative programmes (NIP); to map out strategies for effective integration of the UNCCD priority activities into country support strategies developed for the implementation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement; to identify financial needs for national and subregional action programmes; to map out modalities for accessing the foreseen EDF funds within the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

Recommendations emanating from the consultative workshops were:

- Country Parties that have not yet completed their NAPs should finalize them on or before the end of 2005;

- Country Parties that currently do not have NAPs should ensure that UNCCD issues were included in the CSS and subsequently in the NIPs;

- Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Economic Planning and Finance should articulate the NAP issues in the appropriate national forums to facilitate dialogue and their inclusion in the NIPs and the rolling programming;

- The UNCCD national focal point and the national authorizing officer (NAO) should create and conduct public awareness measures on the need to include the NAP priorities in the NIP;

- The national focal point and the NAO should call for a consultative dialogue among the EU Member States, the UNDP, the World Bank and the EU delegate on the need to include the NAPs into the ACP-EU partnership rolling programming;

- Considering the important role of civil society and NGOs, stakeholders must elaborate and implement programmes and projects on the basis of partnerships;

- Subregional institutions should identify priority activities under the respective SRAPs that can be included in the RSS/RIP;

- The EU delegations and other development partners should facilitate efforts at national, subregional and regional levels aimed at identifying possible areas of cooperation.

Observations were made by Senegal, Mozambique, Egypt, the Uganda Women's Tree Planting Movement and Morocco. They focused on the following issues:

- For a number of African countries, the PRSPs form the basis for development cooperation, and may therefore also serve as a basis for cooperation with the EU and thus be coherent with the CSSs and NIPs;

- The UNCCD secretariat is requested to continue actively to assist African country Parties in accessing cooperation channels of the EU;

- National UNCCD focal points are urged to collaborate actively with their respective NAOs;

- The question was raised as to which alternatives exist for those African countries that do not belong to the ACP group.

In response, the UNCCD secretariat gave the following clarification: Since Northern African countries do not belong to the ACP framework, the secretariat is ready to assist these countries in identifying alternative funding channels.

4. Status of UNCCD implementation at national level

The participants to the Conference heard presentations from representatives of the following countries: Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, Djibouti, Burundi, Gambia, Eritrea, Egypt, South Africa, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Swaziland, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Togo, Cameroon, Namibia, Sao Tomé and Principe, Mozambique, Morocco, Liberia, Libya, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Tunisia. Further statements were submitted by Cape Verde, Mali, Benin and Niger. Statements in full are available at the UNCCD secretariat.

Since COP 4, the implementation process has been realized in different ways by countries, notably:

- Countries where the elaboration of NAPs is still pending due to organizational/technical and/or financial constraints;

- Countries which have been elaborating their NAPs since COP4 or which have organized a launching forum;

- Countries which have validated their NAPs at national forums;

- Countries which have launched the implementation process of their NAP through the organization of national consultative forums on resource mobilization and partnership agreements;

- Countries which have launched activities towards the integration of national plans and strategies as well as the creation of synergies with interlinked environmental conventions.

Although success and advancement has been reported in some cases and areas, the following major constraints were mentioned:

- Insufficient awareness on the part of populations in countries which have not been able to launch and/or conclude the NAP process as well as in those countries which already have a validated NAP;

- Insufficient integration in national plans and strategies (particularly poverty reduction strategies as PRSPs, CSSs and NIPs) in a number of countries along with a lack of prioritization of NAPs by governments;

- Lack of sufficient funding at various stages (elaboration, implementation of NAPs);

- Absence of synergies between the implementation of interlinked environmental conventions in most countries.

A number of recommendations were given for the enhancement of the implementation process at national level. These are reflected in the annexed general recommendations of the Conference (see annex II).

5. Progress made in formulation/implementation of the subregional action programmes (SRAPs)

Four of the six geographic subregional organizations reported on the process of implementation of SRAPs. These organizations were: IGAD for Eastern Africa, SADC for Southern Africa, AMU for the Maghreb region, and CEMAC for Central Africa. A written report was submitted by CILSS for Western Africa.

IGAD: Progress report on the implementation of the SRAP for Eastern Africa

The IGAD representative stated that his organization had launched 27 projects and programmes relating to desertification matters, amongst which is the implementation of the UNCCD itself, in particular the SRAP. IGAD has:

- provided support to member states in NAP preparation/implementation;
- served as a forum for exchange;
- achieved formulation and implementation of its SRAP including nine priority areas and 46 project areas, 28 per cent of which are currently being implemented.

The following constraints were stated:

- inadequate fund raising capacities;
- inadequate capacity;
- inappropriate policy frameworks/lack of implementation of existing policies;
- inadequate information and networking.

The following conclusions were drawn:

- partnership building should be strengthened including the involvement of the private sector and regional NGOs;
- the regional institutional framework should be made operational;
- modalities for a subregional desertification fund should be established;
- GM assists in assessing the implementation of NAPs and the SRAP;
- IGAD welcomes the opening of a window of the GEF;
- a regional support strategy and RIP in the context of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement has been developed.

SADC: Progress report on the implementation of the Southern African SRAP

The representative of SADC stated that SADC adopted its SRAP in 1997. She focused mainly on resource mobilization efforts, especially following decision 9/COP.3, which was followed by the convening of the SADC/IGAD subregional resource mobilization workshop (2-4 October 2000, Mombasa, Kenya), with the support of the GM and its facilitation committee. This workshop adopted a master plan for the forthcoming process by establishing a framework for capacity building and an information system on financial resources.

The workshop highlighted the following difficulties encountered while implementing the SRAPs:

- inadequate and unpredictable funding;
- poor coordination with cooperation partners;

- lack of information on access to existing funding mechanisms;
- poor coordination among the various relevant sectors;
- inadequate national level capacities;
- marginalization of NAPs and SRAPs in development frameworks;
- lack of integration of NAPs into national development policies.

As a direct follow up to the Mombasa workshop, another workshop took place in May 2001 in Pretoria, South Africa, as a SADC consultation on partnership, focusing on mainstreaming resource mobilization at national and subregional levels:

- National and subregional capacity building needs were identified;
- Development of priority projects in transboundary resource management was considered and a follow-up plan agreed upon;
- A subregional support facility was established and the Global Mechanism agreed to provide initial capitalization of US$ 950,000 to this facility;
- A major achievement of the workshop was the bringing together of officials from the Ministries of Finance, Planning, Environment and Agriculture to work as country teams in the implementation of the NAPs.

AMU (UMA): Progress report on the implementation of the SRAP/Maghreb

In order to implement the SRAP, UMA has elaborated project proposals jointly with the member states, and has contacted a number of partners for technical and/or financial cooperation, notably ICARDA, GM, WB, IDB, OSS, OACT, EU, GEF and ITU, among others. UMA is cooperating more closely with the Global Mechanism, in order to define a strategic intervention framework which would identify all donors available and invite them to cooperate with UMA under the SRAP framework.

In particular, the following programme areas have been followed up:

- Elaboration of technical sheets to inform partners in development and science;
- Cooperation with research institutions in the CILSS subregion;
- Creation of a subregional coordination body;
- Subscription to the Land and Water Initiative of the World Bank;
- Fostering of the participatory approach;
- Establishment of a subregional information system and data base;
- Promotion of traditional knowledge;
- Running of transboundary projects;
- Planning of a subregional synergy workshop;
- Support to the second phase of the green belt project in the Maghreb area.

CEMAC : Progress report on implementation of the SRAP in Central Africa

The representative of CEMAC informed participants that his institution was accredited observer status during COP 3. Since then, exchanges between CEMAC and countries of Central Africa and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Region have been pursued, which have resulted in the organization of a focal points meeting in June 2000, with the support of the UNCCD secretariat. This meeting formulated recommendations on the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns for stakeholders and high-level government authorities. Perception of the term "desertification" is found to be problematic due to the very peculiar environmental problems of Central African countries. Moreover, it was pointed out that CEMAC, being an economic institution, does not have a team of experts in the field of desertification.

Pursuant to this presentation, the representative of Egypt took the floor to emphasize that his country is not taken into account by the SRAP process facilitated by AMU, although it belongs to the geographical region of Northern Africa. He therefore requested that the UNCCD secretariat should increase its efforts towards implementation of various decisions taken by conferences towards Egypt's inclusion in subregional activities.

Further remarks were made by South Africa, the Uganda Tree Planting Movement, the Central African Republic, Tunisia and Gambia. Ambassador Biaou from Benin recalled that decision 9/COP.3 urged the GM to organize subregional and regional resource mobilization workshops with the objective of facilitating access to existing funding resources. The Executive Secretary recalled the priority that is to be given to national level activities.

6. Consideration of the progress made in the launching of regional thematic programme networks (TPNs) of the regional action programme

A presentation was given by Dr. Moise Aklé, Coordinator, Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) for Africa, and complemented by the water TPN focal point.

Two meetings for the launching of the thematic programme networks have been held, one in November-December 2000 in Accra, Ghana, on the integrated management of water resources of international rivers, lakes and hydrogeological basins of the continent in the UNCCD context, the other in June 2001 in Lomé, Togo, on the promotion of agroforestry and soil conservation in rural development programmes in Africa. The third meeting for the launching of TPN activities during the current biennium (2000-2001) concerns the rational use of rangelands and the development of fodder crops. Negotiations are currently under way to organize this meeting before the end of the year in one of the countries of the southern African region.

He recalled that a number of UNCCD priority activities of interest for collaboration with AfDB, the host institution of the Africa RCU, as recommended by the TPN meetings, are under consideration at the level of this institution within the framework of the proposed AfDB/UNCCD joint work plan. These concern in particular:

(a) For the integrated management of water resources of Africa's international rivers, lakes and hydrogeological basins in the context of UNCCD:

- Support to regional and subregional initiatives for the promotion of pilot projects for the rational use of water resources of the international rivers, lakes and hydrogeological basins in the framework of the implementation of existing poverty reduction strategies;

- Support to regional and subregional initiatives for the promotion of synergies between conventions;

- Contribution to regional and subregional initiatives for financial resources mobilization for the implementation of action plans and programmes for integrated management of water resources (for example, possible contribution to the Land and Water Initiative, the donors' round table for the West African Ministerial Plan of Action for

integrated management of water resources, and the Regional Strategic Action Plan for integrated water resource development and management in the SADC region.

(b) For the promotion of agroforestry and soil conservation in rural development programmes in Africa:

- Support to regional and subregional initiatives for the promotion of domestication, processing and marketing of agroforestry products of socio-economic interest for African country Parties;

- Support to regional and subregional initiatives for the promotion of synergies between the environmental and sustainable development conventions.

For all these follow-up activities, there is a need to develop concrete proposals, which the institutions concerned should submit for the consideration of various donors. To that effect, it was suggested that the network's institutional focal points invite those of their members who wish to do so to submit project proposals under a project portfolio entitled "Support to regional and subregional initiatives for UNCCD implementation".

After the presentation, remarks were made by Namibia, Egypt, Tunisia, UMA, IGAD and Ambassador Biaou. They highlighted the following points:

- TPN activities should strengthen their links to NAP activities and orient themselves towards priorities identified by relevant COP decisions;

- The RCU should regularly inform national focal points on ongoing TPN activities;

- Concerned countries are to be consulted while producing hydrological maps.

7. Recommendations of NGOs on the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, subregional and regional/international levels

The NGO community, represented by Sahel Défis, addressed the Conference through a common declaration covering the following points:

- NGOs expressed their needs regarding a better collaboration with governments, other civil society organizations and the donor community in order for them to play their role in the preparation and implementation of NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs.

- They stressed the need for more resources in order to carry out their obligations.

- They indicated that the preparation and implementation of NAPs and SRAPs are more advanced in countries where civil society is organized;

- NGOs expressed the need to supplement national reports with one regional comprehensive report which synthesizes the subregional reports and which informs about field success stories.

- They urged African governments to implement decisions taken by the COP concerning the roster of experts, case studies and best practices.

- The implementation mechanism of the participative approach should be improved, in order to promote better NGO involvement;

- The NGOs called upon partners to introduce more flexible measures in their financing procedures;

- They also requested the UNCCD secretariat to allow a larger number of NGOs to participate in workshops and conferences;

- In some cases, NGO participation in national coordinating bodies has been neglected or bypassed;

- The NGOs informed delegates of the fact that the lack of funding has led in many cases to under-representation in relevant national bodies in charge of UNCCD implementation;

- The NGOs criticized a lack of transparency as regards communication of information from subregional bodies and the regional coordinating body;

- NGOs are actively preparing for COP 5 where one key topic for discussion in the open dialogue session will be the preparation of the WSSD. Additionally, they invited the delegates to participate actively in these sessions;

- The NGOs are also planning informal parallel events to be organized during COP 5.

After delivery of the declaration, remarks were made by the following speakers, reflecting on the involvement of civil society in their respective countries and subregions: Gambia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, IGAD and Namibia. The Executive Secretary called for enhanced involvement of NGOs in UNCCD activities at national level.

A final intervention was made by Sahel Défis on behalf of the NGO community and complemented by ENDA, the Uganda Women's Tree Planting Movement, AFAD, ENCCD Ethiopia, NCCD Kenya, and EMG S.A.

8. Consideration of activities of bilateral and multilateral partners in support of implementation of the UNCCD

The World Bank renewed its commitment towards the UNCCD implementation process in Africa. Since COP 4, the World Bank's operations have been further developed through a broad consultative process focusing on three major goals:

- improving the quality of life
- improving the equity of growth
- balanced use of global and common goods.

Land degradation and desertification strategies must be implemented as part of a broad development agenda and should focus particularly on local development. Debt relief strategies function as major instruments. A new financial instrument

is the community-driven development that aims to ensure greater access to and control of resources for the ultimate beneficiaries. Lastly, the Land and Water Initiative has been launched to reflect the urgent need for an international response to land degradation in Africa. It is meant as a specific contribution to the goals of the Recife declaration.

Ethiopia, Egypt, Togo, Eritrea and the OAU made remarks after this presentation. The Executive Secretary stressed the importance of the Land and Water Initiative for the African region.

Portugal recalled its newly assumed role as *chef de file* in Mozambique, and also its status as affected country. It further stated that it will soon embark on further partnership engagements in Africa.

After this presentation, Gambia made comments and requested, on behalf of CILSS, that Portugal consider assisting Guinea-Bissau in its implementation of the UNCCD.

The AfDB stressed its role in preparation for the Rio+10 summit in 2002, and stated that at the summit momentum will be given to reiterating the global importance of combating desertification and land degradation. The bank has reinforced partnership within ongoing programmes under the UNCCD umbrella linked to key topics such as land tenure, NGO and women's involvement, and access to markets. The bank plays an active role as a member of the Facilitation Committee appointed to support the Global Mechanism, and as a facilitator to access the GEF, in collaboration with the GEF executing agencies. The AfDB is also actively taking part in the activities launched under the Land and Water Initiative. Finally, the Bank reiterated its commitment towards continuing cooperation with the UNCCD secretariat, in particular through its support to the Regional Coordination Unit. A joint work plan is also being worked out.

The ECA recognized desertification as one of the major environmental degradation forces on the African continent. Great emphasis is laid by the ECA on gender issues. The ECA also runs a programme on food security and sustainable development, which is of great relevance for implementation of the UNCCD. Furthermore, in liaison with UNEP and the OAU, the ECA is providing advice to AMCEN so as to enhance the performance of environmental ministries in Africa. It also supports the Land and Water Initiative.

The OAU has allocated significant political and financial commitments to combating desertification and implementing the UNCCD in Africa. The OAU will also significantly contribute to and co-lead the preparations for and deliberations of the 2002 Johannesburg Summit. Given African countries' dependence on land, capacity building to control desertification needs greater emphasis and attention. The OAU is also in the process of revising the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and to incorporate desertification and land degradation issues into its programme. It is collaborating with UNECA, ADB and the Secretariat of the six Regional Economic Communities (CRECS) in leading and guiding Africa's preparations for the RIO+10 conference in Johannesburg in 2002.

After these presentations, remarks were made by Swaziland, Gambia, AFAD, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa.

FAO reported that in relation to African SRAPs, GEF relevant subregional projects within the context of shared natural resources management have been supported as one of the major activities under the UNCCD. It is recalled that development is closely linked with successfully combating desertification. FAO has created a web site on desertification and, more recently, has launched programme activities on shared ecosystem use, and has undertaken forestation seminars, initiatives on synergies, and a panafrican conference to validate regional and subregional funds. It is, furthermore, closely involved in the preparation of the Rio+10 summit.

The representative of the Global Mechanism mentioned that its specific type of cooperation had already been noted in many contributions. It recalled that desertification has a strong link with sustainable development. The GM assists affected developing country Parties in accessing existing funds. The main programmatic focus is laid on: mainstreaming at national level, partnership building to define action to be taken in common, and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations as well as with the members of the Facilitation Committee. The GM supports civil society through collaboration with RIOD. It is working towards what are known as multi-donor hubs. The GM also stated that it is in the process of preparing a subregional resource mobilization workshop for Western Africa, which had not be held so far due to organizational shortcomings, but would be held before the end of 2001. Furthermore, an overview is required on ongoing activities to support initiatives towards resource mobilization at local, national, and subregional level in the African region. Support from the GEF for such initiatives is also required.

UNDP/UNSO reported that they havd given support to the formulation of action programmes (NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs), the largest share going to Africa. Many partners have been involved, and a number of these action programmes are now being finalized or have already been adopted. Many challenges and contraints have been recognized during this process, among which is the need for mainstreaming and integration along with enhanced resource mobilization. A new integrated programme aims at mainstreaming of dryland issues into development strategies, decreasing vulnerability, and local governance for natural resources management. UNSO has finalized its relocation to Nairobi. It recalled the importance of the outcomes of the AHWG for progress at country level.

UNEP recalled the major environmental challenges its programme is dealing with, amongst which is desertification. One of UNEP's priorities is synergies between conventions. Africa has an outstanding exposure to environmental and development challenges and problems along with the issue of economic growth. UNEP has been providing support to the GM. Its Regional Office for Africa (ROA) is in close contact with the UNCCD secretariat. Support will also be provided to a number of future activities. Documents on the status of preparation for the Rio+10 summit have been sent to governments and agencies. A number of conferences is being spearheaded by UNEP to prepare for the Johannesburg summit, with emphasis on synergies and management of post-Rio conventions. An African environmental outlook is being produced as a document. A MOU with all subregional organizations will be established immediately after the Johannesburg summit to pinpoint terms of reference for the way forward.

WMO: drought monitoring and prediction, transfer of expertise and technology, early warning systems, natural disaster preparedness and public awareness are some fields in which this organization is working. Training is being undertaken through the WMO regional meteorological training centres. However, there is an inadequacy of existing networks for climate monitoring due to inefficient funding and lack of technical support. The WMO has established a working group on assessing the impact of desertification and drought in order to advise governments and stakeholders on matters relating to the UNCCD. Its purpose is further to identify and list actions to be undertaken by national and subregional drought monitoring centres. Country surveys have been reviewed, and seminars on drought preparedness have been organized.

Ambassador Biaou from Benin appealed to the Conference not to omit the issue of social development while discussing the notion of sustainable development.

Observations were made by: SADC, Egypt, Guinea, the World Bank, Mozambique, Tunisia, Cote d'Ivoire, AFAD, Morocco and Zimbabwe. They focused on the following points:

- The amounts needed to combat desertification effectively are much higher than any contribution made by donors so far;

- There is a need for clarification as to what role the GM is supposed to play in relation to the GEF;

- The GM is requested to define cleary its role in relation to recipient countries;

- The GM is requested to accelerate its activities to support NGOs.

Finally, the Executive Secretary reiterated the momentum that is likely to be created for the UNCCD process through the opening of a fifth window by the GEF.

9. Consideration of Africa's position on some issues on the agenda of COP 5

A presentation was given by Ambassador Biaou from Benin, Chairman of the African Group of the Convention; it is summarized below:

Consensus is needed for the following points:

- the establishment of the CRIC;

- the inclusion of the costs of RCUs (salary costs) in the core budget for the biennium 2002-2003;

- the growth in the programme and budget for the biennium 2002-2003;

- the establishment of a special group of experts and scientists under the authority of the CST;

- the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a focal area of the GEF;

- the designation of the GEF as the financial mechanism for the implementation of the UNCCD;

- a reminder of the role of the Global Mechanism to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, on a grant basis, and/or on concessional or other terms, to affected developing country Parties.

Finally, the Conference adopted a series of recommendations aiming to enhance implementation of the Convention in Africa (see annex II).

Annex I

VOTE OF THANKS

On behalf of the participants in the fifth African Regional Preparatory Conference to COP 5 (Maputo, Mozambique, 27-29 August 2001), I have the honour to convey our heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to the people and government of the Republic of Mozambique, for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us during this Conference.

It is with respect and admiration that we have taken note of the strength and determination with which Mozambique has addressed the severe environmental challenges and catastrophes of the recent past. We should thus like to assure the people and the government of Mozambique of our solidarity.

May this Conference contribute to creating a momentum for raising awareness of the severe impacts of environmental disaster and help to find ways and means for enhanced global commitment to sustainable development.

Annex II

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Contributions required for the core budget of the Convention

1. The Conference calls upon all African countries which have not yet done so to pay promptly and in full their contributions that are in arrears for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001 before 1 October 2001 and no later than 1 December 2001.

2. The Conference calls upon all African countries to pay on 1 January 2002 their contributions for the biennium 2002-2003 to be adopted in October 2001 in Geneva during COP 5.

B. Implementation of the Convention

3. The Conference, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention, and of decision 8/COP.4, "Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention", recommends country Parties to continue:

- To pursue their efforts in implementing the Convention, notably at local level;

- To strengthen, as appropriate, links between national focal points and their authorities for development cooperation;

- To implement the recommendations emanating from the Addis Ababa and Cotonou workshops "on the integration of the priority activities of the UNCCD into the Country Support Strategies of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement";

- To enhance integration of implementation of the Convention into national development strategies and other relevant policy areas.

4. The Conference requests the UNCCD secretariat to assist Northern African countries not part of the ACP framework in identifying alternative funding channels through the EU.

C. Elaboration and adoption of national action programmes

5. The Conference invites country Parties that have not yet completed their national action programmes (NAPs) to take all necessary measures in order to accelerate the process of elaborating and adopting their NAPs with a view to finalizing them by the end of 2005 as recommended by the Declaration (see decision 8/COP.4).

6. The Conference stresses the need for support, through technical and financial assistance, to NAPs formulation in those countries that have not yet concluded the process, and to support the implementation of the NAPs in those countries that have already formulated and adopted their NAPs.

D. Consideration of reports

(a) National reports

7. The Conference invites African countries to put into practice the recommendations from the Ad Hoc Working Group meeting, to strengthen the use of traditional knowledge, benchmarks and indicators for the monitoring of desertification, drought and land degradation problems in the region.

8. The Conference encourages and/or invites country Parties to assess and evaluate progress made in implementing the Convention by using pertinent, quantifiable and readily verifiable indicators and benchmarks, including those related to measuring the participation of all local populations, communities and major groups, particularly women and youth.

9. The Conference recommends that all national reports should be reviewed on an individual basis in order to ensure effective exchange of views and sharing of best practices and experiences.

10. The Conference recommends improvements to the Help Guide in terms of the inclusion of a certain number of indicators and of civil society involvement into the process of the elaboration and implementation of action programmes.

(b) Subregional reports

11. The Conference noted the efforts made by the African subregional organizations (CEMAC, CILSS/ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC, UMA) in the elaboration and implementation of the subregional action programmes (SRAPs). The Conference recommends these organizations to pursue their efforts in order to coordinate NAPs in their respective subregions and in the further elaboration and implementation of transboundary activities.

12. The Conference recommends the integration, as appropriate, of African countries not members of subregional organizations into the preparation and implementation of subregional action programmes concerning the five African subregions, as stated in article 10 of the regional implementation annex for Africa, and requests the secretariat, if necessary, to continue to facilitate such integration.

(c) Reports from regional and international organizations and agencies

13. The Conference acknowledged, with appreciation, the support so far provided by AfDB, OAU, FAO, UNDP/UNSO, UNECA, UNEP, WB and WMO to the process of elaboration and implementation of action programmes in Africa, and to this effect recommends that they continue to provide such support in a predictable manner.

E. Financial resources mobilization

14. The Conference strongly urges African country Parties to provide adequate financial resources within their national budgets for the implementation of the Convention.

15. The Conference underlines the need to design economic instruments and environmental services that allow the channelling of public and private investments to combating desertification and to mitigating the effects of drought at all levels.

16. The Conference emphasizes the need for building financial synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements, and calls upon bilateral and multilateral development partners of African countries to provide or to continue to provide them with substantial financial resources in order to enable them to fulfil their mandate and obligations under the Convention.

17. The Conference requests developed country Parties to adjust their own procedures for the delivery of programme resources in a manner deemed adequate to deliver their commitments as Parties to the Convention.

18. The Conference urges affected developing countries to put forward priority projects or programmes for the NAPs in their regular negotiations with developed country Parties.

F. Enhancement of the implementation of the Convention by the GEF

19. The Conference strongly requests the Conference of the Parties to designate the GEF as the operational financial mechanism of the UNCCD, in order to provide it with predictable financial resources to enable it to achieve its objectives in a timely and efficient manner.

20. The Conference also requests the GEF, at its next Assembly meeting in Beijing 2002, to designate "desertification" as a fully fledged GEF focal area along with biodiversity, climate change, the protection of the ozone layer and international waters.

21. The Conference further requests the GEF, at its next replenishment meeting to be held in October 2001, to take appropriate actions so as to allocate adequate resources for the implementation of the required enabling activities and catalytic funding under the UNCCD.

22. The Conference invites the secretariats of the UNCCD and the GEF to further enhance their collaboration; in this regard, urges the Executive Secretary of the Convention, the Chairman of the Conference and the Chairman of the African Group of the UNCCD, in conjunction with key representatives of country Parties to the Convention, to take all necessary measures and arrangements to implement the decision adopted by the last Council in May 2001.

G. Synergies with other relevant international initiatives

(a) ACP-EU Partnership Agreement

23. The Conference encourages the UNCCD and the ACP secretariats to continue to strengthen the partnership agreed upon in order to enhance the opportunities for the UNCCD priority activities to access EDF resources through the National Indicative Programmes developed for the implementation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement.

24. The Conference encourages the UNCCD secretariat to continue its efforts, building upon the recommendations made by the Addis Ababa and Cotonou workshops, to link poverty and land degradation aspects through the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and encourages countries to include and prioritize the Convention's objectives in national development policies.

(b) Other conventions on sustainable development

25. The Conference requests the Executive Secretary and African country Parties to continue to pay particular attention to issues relating to desertification, drought and fragile ecosystems considered by other relevant sustainable development conventions and international legal instruments.

26. The Conference welcomes the initiatives of the UNCCD secretariat to facilitate at country level the implementation of activities directed to promote synergies among the Rio conventions and Ramsar, and invites the secretariat to continue to support the holding of synergy workshops in all the countries of the region with a view to finalizing the process no later than 2003.

(c) Africa Land and Water Management Initiative (ALWI)

27.T he Conference welcomes this initiative and recognizes it as an important contribution of the World Bank and institutions associated to the implementation of the Declaration of the Bonn/Recife Initiative.

28. The Conference requests the World Bank and the relevant institutions concerned to accelerate the process of putting the ALWI into operation.

H. Global Mechanism

29. The Conference, in accordance with decision 9/COP.3, invites the Global Mechanism to organize, in collaboration with the UNCCD secretariat, the remaining subregional workshops on procedures for accessing existing financial mechanisms, with the aim of mobilizing and channelling financial resources for the implementation and transfer of technologies.

30. The Conference invites the Global Mechanism to increase its funding to support the preparation of future national reports, and recommends the COP 5 to reiterate its request to the GM and its Facilitation Committee to facilitate the immediate implementation of the capacity-building framework and communication strategy for resources mobilization.

31. The Conference insists that the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism should clearly underline the ways and means it will undertake in order to effectively, promptly and efficiently mobilize and channel substantial financial resources, including new and additional financial resources, as well as resources for the transfer of technology.

I. Support to the regional coordination units

32. The Conference strongly requests the COP to incorporate the RCUs as an integral part of the secretariat by including the costs of the units in the secretariat's core budget for the biennium 2002-2003, in order to strengthen the process of efficient implementation of the Convention in all the regions.

33. The Conference invites African countries and their bilateral and multilateral development partners to make voluntary contributions, and to conclude partnership agreements or arrangements, with a view to facilitating funding for the full and effective implementation of the regional action programme for Africa; it further invites African regional and subregional organizations, particularly OAU, AfDB, CEMAC, ECOWAS, CILSS, SADC, UMA and IGAD, to make voluntary contributions in support of the functioning of the RCUs and activities under the RAP.

J. Establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC)

34. The Conference strongly recommends that the forthcoming session of the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision formally establishing a Committee to review the implementation of the Convention as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties.

K. Committee on Science and Technology

35. The Conference recommends improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee of Science and Technology by establishing, under the authority of the CST, a special group of some 21 experts and scientists on the basis of equitable geographical representation.

36. The Conference proposes that the topics for the future programme of work of the CST, recommended by the African Group at COP 4, as listed below, be reviewed and taken into account in negotiations at COP 5:

- conservation of local products
- integrated control of crop diseases
- control of harmful aquatic plants
- promotion of new and renewable energy
- promotion of alternative or supplementary livelihood development and livelihood diversification
- promotion of the exchange of information on and experiences of traditional knowledge among affected developing countries.

37. The Conference recommends that the CST, with its special group of experts to be established, in the interest of building synergies with scientific bodies of the UNFCCC and CBD, work closely with the IPCC etc. in order to take advantage of outcomes from these bodies.

L. Involvement of civil society, particularly NGOs

38. The Conference, in order to involve civil society further, encourages African country Parties to develop a facilitating legal environment within the NAP framework, to enable civil society to provide input into the process of elaboration and implementation of action programmes and to mobilize populations for the successful implementation of projects and activities.

39. The Conference invites NGO focal points and their constituencies to enhance their coordination with the national focal points of the countries of the region for the effective implementation of the Convention and to ensure their participation in the elaboration of national reports.

40. The Conference requests the UNCCD secretariat to include matters relating to civil society in all actions undertaken for the achievement of the Convention's objectives.

41. The Conference welcomes the NGO display of an NGO village at COP 5 and urges all African country delegates to support it.

M. Enhancement of gender issues

42. The Conference recommends that the gender perspective, particularly at grass-roots level, should be reinforced through national action programmes, including awareness raising, education, training, income generating activities and access to credit.

43. The Conference also recommends that African countries ensure the participation of women at all levels in decision-making processes for implementation of the Convention.

N. Development of environmental laws

44. The Conference urges African country Parties to work closely with UNEP to develop environmental laws that are consistent with the elements of the NAP.

O. Outstanding legal issues

45. The Conference recommends the African Group of the Convention to continue to support the position taken, or to be taken, by the Group of 77 and China on outstanding legal issues of the Convention, notably consideration of the pending article 47 of the rules of procedure, as well as consideration of procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions on implementation of the Convention, and consideration of annexes containing arbitration and conciliation procedures.

P. Other matters

(a) Preparatory process for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development

46. The Conference calls attention to the need for African countries to be well prepared for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and to use this opportunity to enhance support for the implementation of the UNCCD through the effective and active participation of national focal points in the preparatory process and during the summit.

47. The Conference recommends and invites the COP, at its fifth session, to approve the holding of an extraordinary session of the Conference of the Parties in 2002 before the Johannesburg Summit, aimed at identifying and adopting decision on the contributions to be made by the country Parties at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

48. The Conference welcomes the initiative of the UNCCD secretariat and the UN-DESA to establish a panel of high-level experts to provide substantive input to the preparatory activities of the Johannesburg Summit, focusing on "The environment/poverty nexus as part of the implementation of the UNCCD".

(b) Composition of the Bureau of COP 5

49. The Conference recalls that the first session of the COP had the following representation from Africa: Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and Western Africa, COP 2 had in the Bureau representatives from Western and Northern Africa, COP 3 had representatives from Central, Southern and Western Africa, while the Bureau of COP 4 had representatives from Western Africa and Northern Africa.

50. The Conference recommends that the African country Parties' representatives to the Bureau of COP 5 should come from Central Africa and Eastern Africa and to the Bureau of the CST from Western Africa. These seats will be allocated as follows:

- Two (2) seats of Vice-President of the Bureau of the COP; and
- One (1) seat of Vice-President of the Bureau of the CST.

(c) Reappointment of the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD

51. The Conference takes note with great appreciation of the reappointment of the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD for another term of three years and invites the COP to adopt a motion of thanks to the United Nations Secretary General and to the Bureau of COP 4 for the confidence they place in him.

Annex III

AGENDA

Monday, 27 August 2001

08.00 - 09.00	Registration	
09.00 - 10.00	Item 1: Opening session	
10.00 - 10.15	Tea/coffee break	
10.15 - 10.30	Item 2:	Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda of the meeting
10.30 - 12.00	Item 3:	Consideration of the outcomes of COP 4 as regards the implementation of the UNCCD in affected African country Parties Presentation and discussion on the implementation of pertinent COP decisions
12.00 - 13.00	Item 4:	Consideration of the outcomes of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting (AHWG) Presentation and discussion
13.00 - 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 - 15.00	Item 5:	Consideration of the outcomes of the UNCCD/ACP joint workshops on the integration of priority issues of the NAPs into the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement Country Support Strategies (CSS) Presentation and discussion
15.00 - 15.45	Item 6:	Status of UNCCD implementation at national level Presentation and discussion
15.45 - 16.00	Tea/coffee break	
16.00 - 18.30	Continuation of item 6	

Tuesday, 28 August 2001

09.00 - 10.30	Item 7:	Progress made in formulation/implementation of the subregional action programmes (SRAPs): CILSS/ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC, UMA, CEMAC Presentation and discussion
10.30 - 10.45	Tea/coffee break	
10.45 - 12.00	Item 8:	Consideration of the progress made on the launching of regional thematic programme networks (TPN) of the regional action programme Presentation and discussion

12.00 - 13.00	Item 9:	Recommendations of the NGO on the implementation of the UNCCD at the national, subregional and regional/international levels Presentation and discussion
13.00 - 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 - 16.00	Item 10:	Consideration of activities of bilateral and multilateral partners in support of the implementation of the UNCCD · Bilateral partners · Regional institutions: *(1) ADB, (2) ECA, (3) OAU* · International organizations: *(1) FAO, (2) GM, (3) UNEP, (4) UNDP/UNSO, (5) WB, (6) WMO* Presentation and discussion
16.00 - 16.30	Tea/coffee break	
16.30 - 18.30	Item 11:	Consideration of Africa's position on issues on the agenda of COP 5 Presentation and discussion

Wednesday, 29 August 2001

09.00 - 11.00	Continuation of item 11 Recommendations and conclusions
11.00 - 12.00	Tea/coffee break
12.00 - 13.00	Item 12: Presentation of the recommendations and conclusions of the Conference
13.00 - 14.00	Item 13: Adoption of the recommendations and conclusions of the Conference Presentation of the Chairman's summary
14.00 - 15.00	Closing session

Annex IV[1]

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1 Annex in English, French and Portugese only as submitted.

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